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ABSTRACT

While the American Revolution officially began in Lexington, Massachusetts, in April 1775, the seeds of rebellion had been sown for decades. The struggle for representation in the British Parliament left many colonists eager to seek out independence. This book provides hundreds of firsthand accounts of the period from diary entries, letters, speeches, and newspaper articles that illustrate how historical events appeared to those who lived through them. Among the eyewitness testimonies included are those of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Abigail Adams, Thomas Paine, Lord Cornwallis, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. Following an Introduction, there are nine chapters: (1) "Prelude to Revolt: 1756-1774"; (2) "Shots Heard Round the World: 1775"; (3) "Declaring Independence: 1776"; (4) "Victories and Losses: 1777"; (5) "From Valley Forge to Vincennes: 1778"; (6) "A Great Sea Battle: 1779"; (7) "Defeat and Treachery: 1780"; (8) "An Improbable Triumph: 1781"; and (9) "An Unpromising Outcome: 1782-1783." Appendixes contain documents, biographies of major personalities, and maps. Each chapter provides an introductory essay and a chronology of events. Contains a 66-item bibliography. (BT)

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